

421 Eleventh St. (Commercial Building)  
(Am-Chi Restaurant)  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-479

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
263-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
421 Eleventh Street, N.W. (Commercial Building)  
(Am Chi Restaurant) HABS No. DC-479

Location: Square 348, Lot 812, 421 Eleventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. East side of Eleventh Street between 'E' Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Present Owner: 1001 Pennsylvania Associates (July 1980).

Present Occupant and Use: Vacant due to fire damage.

Future Use: The structure will be incorporated into a new, full block multi-use structure, designed by Hartman-Cox with Smith Segreti Tepper, and built for developers D.W. Evans and R.S. Cohen.

Significance: 421 Eleventh Street is an eclectic mixture of architectural elements seen in commercial facade redesign in the early 20th Century. The blend of elements into the overall Italianate facade is seen as a small scale solution to attempts at ornamenting taller commercial structures at this period of the Twentieth Century. Although not the original storefront, the scale and massing of the structure make it an integral element in the rhythm of the east side of Eleventh Street.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION.

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: Although no original building permits exists for precise dates of construction, evidence suggests construction occurred between 1873-1880. An 1886 permit for alteration (#614, 2 July 1886), for the construction of show windows is physically evident on the 1887 Baists

map as the extant building. A marked increase in general assessment and tax records between 1873 and 1880 gives the estimated construction dates.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title of the land on which the structure is located. References are the District of Columbia General Assessment Records and the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds.

1839 Assessed to Ino Willis.

1844 Assessed to John Willis.

1859 Assessed to William P. Flaherty, In Trust.

1889 Assessed to Edward Kaiser.

1893 Assessed to Ben Warder.

1911 Assessed to American Security and Trust, Trustees.

1939 Deed, 3 February 1939, Recorded 4 February 1939 in  
Liber 7313, Folio 179.

Washington Loan and Trust Company

to

Evening Star Newspaper Company

1961 Deed, 12 November 1961, Recorded 13 November 1961 in  
Liber 11702, Folio 497.

Evening Star Newspaper Company

to

421 Eleventh Street Corporation, Riggs National  
Bank, Trustees.

1963 Deed 22 September 1963, Recorded 24 September 1963, in  
Liber 12074, Folio 443.

421 Eleventh Street Corporation

to

E. Fulton Brylawski.

1964 Deed 22 June 1964, Recorded 24 June 1964 in  
Liber 12232, Folio 27.

E. Fulton Brylawski

to

Constantine Gogos, Tenants by Entirety.

1972 Deed 6 July 1972, Recorded 7 July 1972, in  
Liber 13364, Folio 551.

Pandora Gogos

to

Georgia Gogos.

1979 Deed 30 May 1979, Recorded 31 May 1979 in  
Instrument # (as yet un-numbered).

G.G. Gogos

to

1001 Pennsylvania Associates.

4. Builder, Contractor, Supplier: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: There are no original drawings available for 421 Eleventh Street. Building Permit #155, 18 July 1890, states a new storefront was designed by Architects Simmons and King, and a 1912 Permit, #3112, 27 December, also mentions storefront alterations; no details are given, therefore it is impossible to determine how much, if any, of the original facade exists today.
6. Alterations and additions: Building permits cited are

as follows:

- a. A new storefront and two show windows were installed in 1886 on Permit # 614, 2 September.
- b. In 1890, Architects Simmons and King took out the first story and installed iron girders and a new storefront. The back building (17' x 60' x 4 stories) was taken down and rebuilt. (The permit, #155, 18 July, gives original dimensions of front structure as 25' x 40' and four stories, unoccupied; to be used as store and offices.)
- c. Two openings in the stud partitions on the fourth floor were cut by contractor W.R. Reeve; one at nine feet wide, one at 7'6" wide. (Permit #2699, 21 October 1909).
- d. Several major alterations occurred in 1912 (Permit #3112, 27 December), with Architect T.J.D. Fuller. In the front building, floors were cut through to install a new foundation of steel columns and replacement of 2 x 12" floor joists with 3 x 10's as well. New floors were laid in the front building, as well as a new roof and elevator penthouse. A partition and wall were removed and new plastering work was done. Note was also made of "...removing old front...new brickwork on front... laying brick on sidewalk...hang sash ". It is from this wording the determination was made as to the re-design of of the facade. From examination, this author feels the alterations on the facade concerned primarily

the second story below third floor stringcourse, with addition of the roundhead arched windows, and the street level design. The location of vertical divisions appear to have remained unaltered.

- e. In 1918 (Permit #3377, 21 May), the floors were reinforced, new stairs erected (no location specified) plumbing installed, and a fire escape was installed.
- f. Permit #136439, 26 September 1930, states "change front" with no details or drawings. A new rear stairway and partitions were also erected. The architect was R.F. Baresford.
- g. A new vault and marquis were added in October of 1930 (Permit#137047, 15 October). The small drawing on the permit places the marquis over the centered entrance and shows two periphery pilasters in place.

B. Historical Persons and Events Connected With the Structure.

421 Eleventh Street has functioned as commercial space since its construction. The Capitol Wallpaper Company moved from their original location at 313 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., to 421 Eleventh Street in 1909. It was in this year that alterations occurred on the fourth floor (Permit #2699) and most likely was to accommodate the new tenant. The Capitol Wallpaper Company manufactured custom wallpapers, wall and ceiling moldings, and woodwork for fireplace mantels. They remained at 421 Eleventh Street until 1930. The building was vacant for a year and tenants since have varied from confectionary to the current restaurant.

## C. Bibliography

### 1. Primary Sources

- a. District of Columbia Building Permits 1877-1950.  
National Archives, Environmental Resources Division,  
Record Group 351, Washington, D.C.
- b. District of Columbia Deed Records. Recorder of  
Deeds, Washington, D.C.
- c. District of Columbia General and Tax Assessment  
Records, 1839-1922. National Archives, Environmental  
Resources Division, Record Group 351, Washington, D.C.

### 2. Secondary Sources: All of the following are available at the Washingtoniana Division of the Martin Luther King Library in Washington, D.C.

- a. Baist Real Estate Atlas Collection.
- b. Polk's District of Columbia City Directories, 1865-1979.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: 421 Eleventh Street is an eclectic mixture of commercial design elements resulting from various facade alterations in 1912. The extant facade has round-headed arched windows at the second story level, reflective of the neighboring 425-429 Eleventh Street's double-height round-headed openings. The richly decorated cornice, with brackets and medallions, ties the structure with surrounding Italianate facades.
2. Condition of fabric: Due to fire damage in 1980, the

building has been closed to inspection. The facade, however, appears in sound condition above street level. It is in need of some repointing and cleaning.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The overall dimensions are 25' x 100' by four stories tall. The original building is rectangular in shape (25' x 40') with a four-story back building (17' x 60'). The facade is three bays wide.
2. Foundations: The original brick foundation was further supported by the addition of steel columns in 1912.
3. Wall fenestration, finish and color: The Am Chi Restaurant is four stories tall and three bays wide. The original storefront has been covered with a metal and glass front. Two entrances, offset left and right, are of steel and glass with a projecting arched cloth awning over the right entrance.  
  
On the second floor are three round-head arches. A brick stringcourse runs continuously through the spring lines of the arches and two brick pilasters support the converging spring lines at the center arch. The arches themselves are of brick with inset brick soffits. Large rectangular single-paned fixed windows are framed in wood. The arched transoms have been covered with wood.  
  
Third and fourth story windows are segmentally arched with three courses of bull-head brick (laid butt-end out). Windows are six-over-six double-hung sash and stone stringcourses serve as sills. Above the center third story window is an oval terra-cotta medallion.

The full entablature projects strongly over the surface of the facade. There is a molded freize and architrave. Brackets are located in the bed molding with rosettes in the soffits. The cornice itself is molded.

4. Structural system, framing: The original vertical structural system has been altered over a period of time, beginning as early as 1890 with the introduction of iron girders at the first story level. The resulting structural system is a combination of steel vertical members and surviving brick party walls and interior brick walls. Horizontal framing appears from permit information to be a combination of 2 x 12 and 3 x 10 wooden joists.
5. Chimneys: Three brick chimneys are located at the front left, rear left and center, center.
6. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: The principle entrance, located offset left on the facade is a steel frame double door of steel and glass. The offset right doorway is also of steel and glass.
  - b. Windows: The third and fourth floor windows are six-over-six double-hung sash with wood frame. Second story windows are set in wood frames and are fixed panes.
7. Roof
  - a. Shape, covering: The roof is flat, sloped slightly to the east, with an elevator penthouse. A 1903 Baists map shows a small skylight at the center

right of the roof.

- b. Cornice, eaves: The richly decorated cornice appears to be of metal. It is bracketed continuously across the width of the building with vertically projecting florettes at the cymatium.

C. Description of Interior

(Note: A fire in the Spring of 1980 has closed the building for inspection. According to a spokesperson for the owners of the property, the building will remain closed and inspection is not expected to be possible. Fire damage is extensive on the first floor and extends through the second level.)

D. Site

421 Eleventh Street is located in the center of the block on the east side of Eleventh Street. Its immediate neighbor on the north is 423 Eleventh Street, Brodt's Hat Factory (HABS No. D.C.- ), with an early 20th Century facade. On the south is a narrow alley and 419 Eleventh Street, The Munch Room, a one-story building previously a White Tower Restaurant. The remainder of the block is composed of three and four-story Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century commercial structures.

- A At the intersection of Eleventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue is the Evening Star Newspaper Building, the Old Post Office and the Internal Revenue Service Building of the Federal Triangle.

Eleventh Street itself is one of the widest north/south axes in the city at 110' from curb to curb, as was intended in

L'Enfants plan for Washington.

Square 348 is located in the center of an area that historically functioned as the major newspaper printing and paper supply area for Washington during the Nineteenth Century. Eleventh Street was the location of various paper company warehouses, book binding and printing companies, hand embossing firms and a wallpaper manufacturer.

Prepared by W.F. Hunter  
Historian  
PADC  
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### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This study was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and Stipulation 6 of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Jeffrey S. Wolf of PADC was the Supervising Architect in charge. Data was compiled and edited by Wendy Hunter, also with PADC. Documentary photographs were taken by J. Wolf.